



PRESS RELEASE

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For Information Contact Public Affairs

SANDY RAYNOR

Telephone: (602) 514-7625

Cell: (602) 525-2681

MEXICAN CITIZEN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR SMUGGLING WOMAN AND HER 2-YEAR-OLD IN VEHICLE TRUNK

TUCSON, Ariz. -- The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on September 23, 2004, Juan Noe Leon-Lopez, DOB 7/13/67, a Mexican citizen, was sentenced to 18 months in prison by U.S. District Court Judge John M. Roll for Transportation of an Illegal Alien in federal district court in Tucson, Ariz.

Leon-Lopez had previously pleaded guilty to a felony charge of alien smuggling in violation of Title 8, U.S. Code, Section 1324. On May 10, 2004, at the checkpoint on Highway 85 near Ajo, Ariz., federal law enforcement agents observed that Leon-Lopez was extremely nervous. When the agents searched the trunk of the vehicle that he was driving, agents discovered an undocumented woman and her 2-year-old baby concealed in the trunk. The outside temperature at the time was 102 degrees and there was no ventilation in the trunk. Leon-Lopez told the agents that he had just met the woman at a store in Lukeville, Ariz. and agreed to transport her because he felt sorry for her.

The woman, however, told agents that she had made arrangements with Leon-Lopez two months beforehand in Mexico for them to meet at a store in Lukeville, Ariz. after she and her child crossed illegally into the United States. He was to then transport them to Phoenix in his vehicle for \$1,300. She stated that when she met Leon-Lopez at the store, he opened the trunk of the vehicle whereupon she and her child got in.

The investigation in this case was conducted by agents of U.S. Border Patrol.

The prosecution is being handled by Raquel Arellano, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

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